



Queensland University of Technology
Digital Media Research Centre



Social Media Use in Events and Festivals - Two Australian Case Studies

Pilot Studies Report

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24 November 2016

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ISBN: 978-0-9953688-3-5

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This report is has been prepared using social media tracking and analysis infrastructure provided by TrISMA (Tracking Infrastructure for Social Media Activity). TrISMA is funded by the Australian Research Council's LIEF (Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment, and Facilities) research funding program.

Executive Summary

This report evaluates a pilot analysis of how social media was used during two significant regional cultural events: the large 'Dark Mofo' festival held at the Museum of Old and New Art (MoNA) in Hobart, Tasmania in June 2016, and the smaller Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival held in Winton, Queensland in June-July 2016. The study provides a snapshot of the scope for concentrated analysis of 'big' social media data to promote and support better understanding of how social media analytics can meet event organisers and other stakeholders' targets for successful planning and execution of tourism events. While this study focuses primarily on Twitter, it also identifies trends across Facebook and Instagram, as enabled by the TriSMA infrastructure.

Using the TriSMA infrastructure for tracking social media that is hosted at the Digital Media Research Centre at QUT, the evaluation draws out the significance of event organisers, media, and event participants in shaping meaning surrounding the event, and the significance of geo-tagging of posts to platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to digital creative placemaking in the increasingly important regional cultural tourism economy.

Relevant Insights

1. General user engagement with an event or festival complements other forms of on-site engagement. The Dark MOFO case study in particular illustrates how tracking social media engagement can provide a 'barometer of enthusiasm' for an event or festival;
2. Event organisers may need to act as the catalyst for social media engagement with smaller events, as seen with the Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival;
3. The 'visual turn' in social media with platforms such as Instagram will be associated with greater geo-tagging, as these are 'opt out' platforms in terms of provision of geo-spatial data;
4. Event organisers should seek to actively engage with 'lead users' of social media platforms. The possibility of doing so can be enhanced by application of ethnographic methods that complement the insights derived from social media analytics;
5. The analytical framework developed for these case studies lends itself well to comparative regional studies, that can identify trends and patterns, as well as important differences, across a range of events and festivals.

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Overview

Objective

This report undertakes a pilot analysis of how social media was used during two significant regional cultural events: the large 'Dark MOFO' festival held at the Museum of Old and New Art (MoNA) in Hobart, Tasmania in June 2016, and the smaller Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival held in Winton, Queensland in June-July 2016. The study provides a snapshot of the scope for concentrated analysis of 'big' social media data to promote and support better understanding of how social media analytics can meet event organisers and other stakeholders' targets for successful planning and execution of tourism events. While this study focuses primarily on Twitter, it also identifies trends across Facebook and Instagram, as enabled by the TrISMA infrastructure.

Background

Social media is increasingly important to all aspects of tourism while generating ever-more complex webs of trust, engagement and information flow relating to tourist destinations and tourism services.

Digital media transforms the event experience itself by allowing participants real-time online interaction at destinations and during live events, using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others. This comes at a time when events and festivals are increasingly important drivers of tourism and activated cities and regions.

The research project will develop case studies around events in selected locations in order to better understand 'event cognition' associated with live and shared personal experience, and how such event experiences circulate through digital apps during and beyond the life of an event, so as to co-create social and cultural meanings around that event and its locale. It will explore the implications for event tourism, and how local and regional cultural stakeholders can better inform their tourism marketing and creative place-making strategies through understanding the (potential) visitor experience as captured via digital media technologies.

The primary tool employed in this project to social media data across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram is the Tracking Infrastructure for Social Media Activity (TrISMA) infrastructure. This report demonstrates some of the tool's capabilities and, as a result, implications associated with deep analysis of social media data. It draws on 'geo-social' media analysis and provides insights into how digital creative placemaking can be harnessed to promote event and locational cognition around events that are closely associated with a location or region.

In addition to TrISMA, the project will make available real-time tracking and visualisation of Twitter and Instagram data via The Hypometer Live social media analytics dashboard, developed by

Hypometer Technologies Pty Ltd, and will supplement TrISMA's Australian Twitter collection with broader Twitter tracking.

To capture event engagement via a broader range of social and digital media platforms and to draw out wider implications of large-scale social media analytics enabled by TrISMA, further analysis would combine such insights with on-the-ground ethnographic research into individual events, using both digital and in-person methodologies. This *in situ* research will include methods such as shadowing, vox pops, and app walkthroughs with festival-goers and will provide qualitative analysis to balance the project's complementary quantitative, big-data approach.

Scope

This report focuses on social media use analysis of two recent events: The [Vision Splendid](#) Outback Film Festival, held in Winton, QLD between 24 June and 2 July 2016, and the [Dark Mofo](#) festival in Hobart, TAS held on 8-21 June 2016, celebrating the dark through large-scale public art, food, film, music, light and noise.

Comparing analysis of two separate events highlights differences and event unique dynamics and features. The overall project will further emphasise the benefits of comparative studies across Australia of tourism events, enabling access to specific successful mechanisms and operations that could be embraced elsewhere.

For each event, Twitter data was collected before, during and after the event and has been analysed using the TrISMA infrastructure.

Data collected from Twitter includes: overall activity, key accounts (e.g., each event's main account and those of its directors and key stakeholders), hashtags (e.g., #visionsplendid, #darkmofo), and key terms, and place engagement (via geo-located tweets and mentions of place and mobility in the text of tweets related to the events).

This report tells a very specific story for capabilities demonstration only and is a work in progress. A more holistic analysis and documentation are expected to be published when the research project concludes.

Dark Mofo



8–21 June 2016 | Attendees: 280,000 in 2015 (plans to grow attendance to 0.5M by 2021)

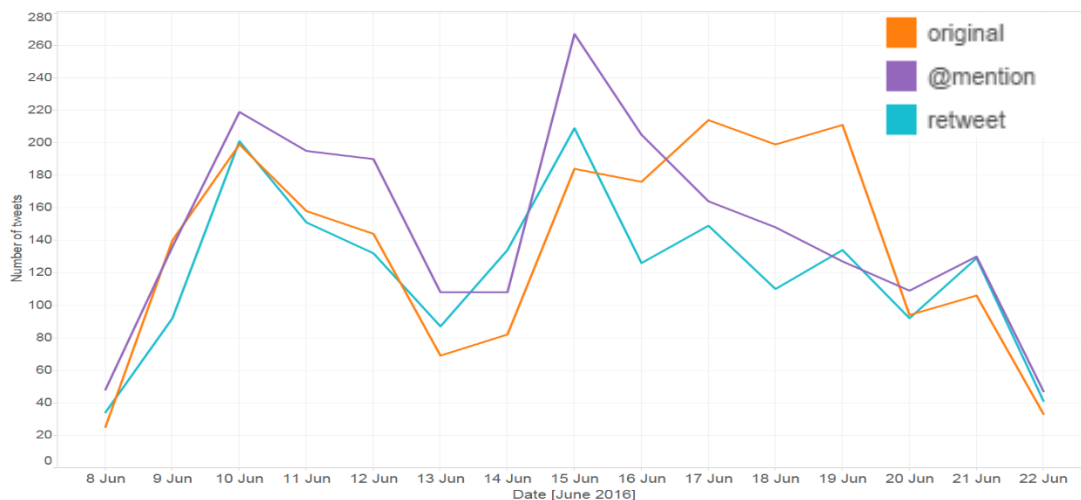
Total tweets: 5,100 | Original tweets: 2,034 | Retweets: 1,821 | @mentions: 2,201 |

Geotweets: 583 | Unique users: 2,394

Twitter Data

Data presented below was captured from Twitter activity during and after the Dark Mofo festival from 8 June to 15 July 2016. Tracked accounts, hashtags, and key terms: @darkmofo, @monamuseum, #darkmofo, #darkmofo2016, #mona, Dark Mofo. Data has been filtered to exclude tweets that were captured but unrelated to the event.

Day to Day Activity

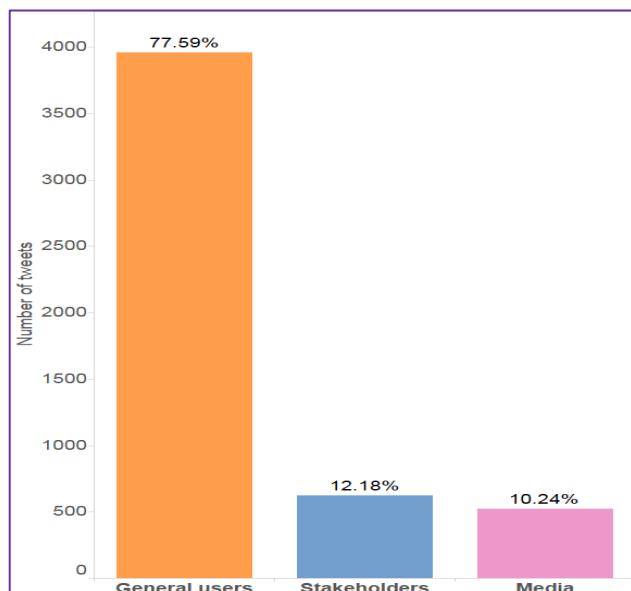


Dark Mofo generated a large number of original tweets, which indicates that there is genuine engagement with the festival, as users are creating their own content when posting about the event.

No particularly dominant topic engaged Twitter users throughout the festival, and the day-to-day activity shows that there were no extreme peaks in activity.

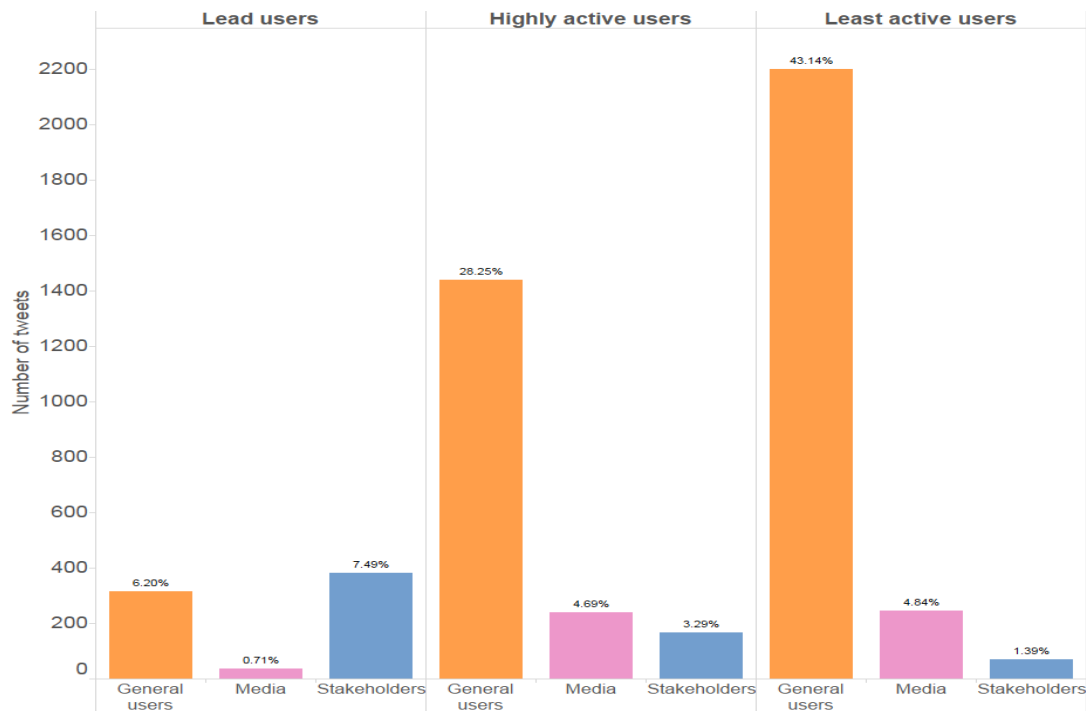
User Type

This graph shows the number of tweets sent by general users, stakeholders and media throughout the festival.¹ Overwhelmingly, those posting about the event were general users (78%). This is in contrast to Vision Splendid (described below), where only 40% of tweets posted were from general users. The contribution of media and stakeholders to the conversation around Dark Mofo was a combined 22% - indicating they were far less prominent at this event in comparison to Vision Splendid, and that Dark Mofo had greater 'on the ground' engagement with festival goers or those engaging with the festival via social media.



¹ Categories of user were identified from their Twitter profiles, or from indicative keywords e.g. 'journalist'. Those without an identifiable professional connection were classified as 'general users'.

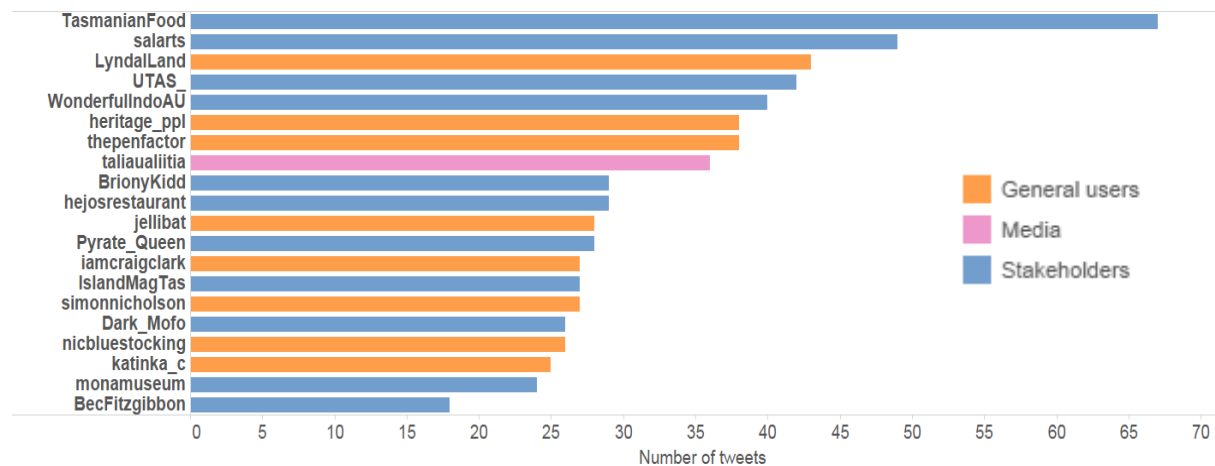
User Profile



This graph shows a breakdown of media, stakeholders and general users into users' percentiles. We can see here that stakeholders were the most represented in the lead users category (closely followed by general users), which indicates that even though stakeholders only accounted for 12% of total tweets, these tweets were coming from a smaller number of very active users. This makes sense, as stakeholders usually post frequently about the event while it is on, to create visibility and publicity for the event on social media.

It is also common that general users are highly represented in the least active user category. Although they make up a large percentage of the overall number of users, general users tend not to tweet frequently. Unlike stakeholders, they tend to post only one or two tweets about an event. In the case of Dark Mofo, however, general users are also strongly represented in the 'Lead users' category and lead the 'High Active Users' group, demonstrating again the notably high level of engagement by general users in social media activity relating to Dark Mofo.

Top 20 Posters

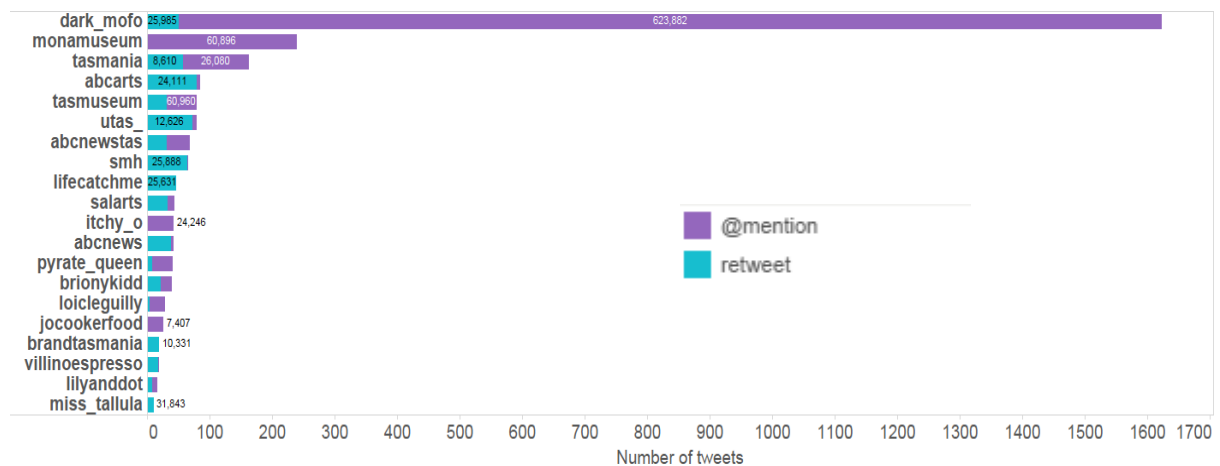


This graph shows the top 20 users who posted the most tweets throughout the festival and categorizes them into media, stakeholder and general user

Overall 20 top posters include 11 stakeholders (55%), 1 media (5%) and 8 general users (40%)

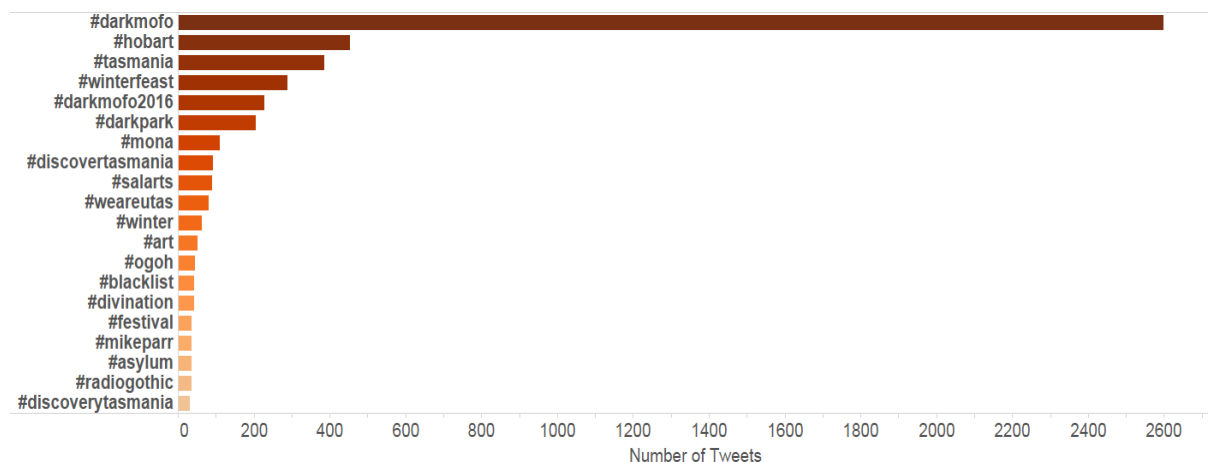
Username	Category	Description
TasmanianFood	Stakeholder	Account that RTs Tasmanian Events
Salarts	Stakeholder	Salamanca Arts Centre – arts/cultural community in Hobart
LyndalLand	General user	
UTAS	Stakeholder	University of Tasmania
WonderfullIndoAU	Stakeholder	Account for events Indonesia in Aus (ties to Ogoh-Ogoh event at Dark Mofo)
Heritage_ppl	General user	
Thepenfactor	General user	
Taliaualiitia	Media	ABC radio producer
BrionyKidd	Stakeholder	Artist at Dark Mofo
Hejosrestaurant	Stakeholder	Tasmanian restaurant that provided food for the winter feast
Jellibat	General user	
Pirate_Queen	Stakeholder	Artist at Dark Mofo
Iamcraigclark	General user	
IslandMagTas	Stakeholder	Island – quarterly journal of arts and culture in Tasmania
Simonnicholson	General user	
Dark_Mofo	Stakeholder	Official event account
Nicbluestocking	General user	
Katinka_c	General user	
Monamuseum	Stakeholder	Official account of Mona Museum
BecFitzgibbon	Stakeholder	Events Media Manager for MONA/Dark Mofo

Most Mentioned Users



This graph describes top 20 users most mentioned in @mentions and retweets. The number included on each bar represents the potential reach of each user, as it reflects the combined number of followers for all users who mentioned or retweeted the user.

Top 20 Hashtags

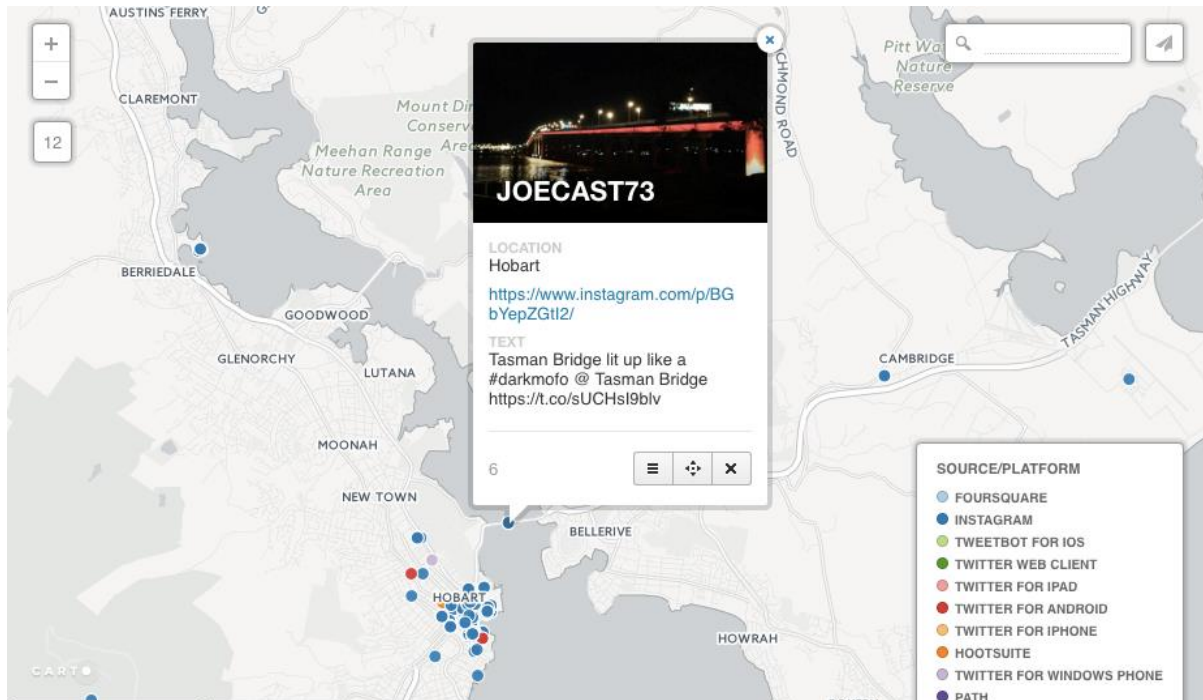


The graph shows the most popular hashtags used on Twitter throughout Dark Mofo. #darkmofo is used far more often than any location based hashtags (unlike Vision Splendid, where #winton was more frequently used in comparison to #visionsplendid). However, location based hashtags were still important, with #tasmania and #hobart the second and third most popular hashtags respectively.

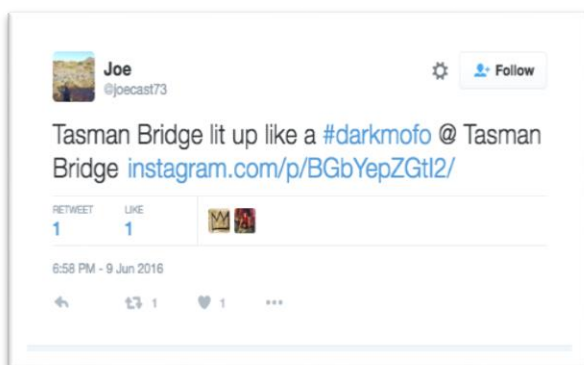
The top 20 hashtags indicate that there was more event-based identification than Vision Splendid, with popular events/artists #winterfeast, #darkpark, #ogoh, #blacklist, #divination, #mikeparr, #asylum and #radiogothic all included in the most used hashtags throughout the event. Including #darkmofo, #darkmofo2016 and #mona, 55% of the top 20 hashtags were specific signifiers to the festival (as opposed to general location signifiers as indicated at Vision Splendid).

Place Engagement

There were 415 tweets related to the Dark Mofo festival tagged with latitude and longitude coordinates. There were also an additional 168 tweets throughout the festival that were identified by place in another way (generally place ID captured in the bounded box). 11.6% of total tweets (583 out of 5007) posted throughout the festival were identified by place in some form.²



Geo Located Tweets



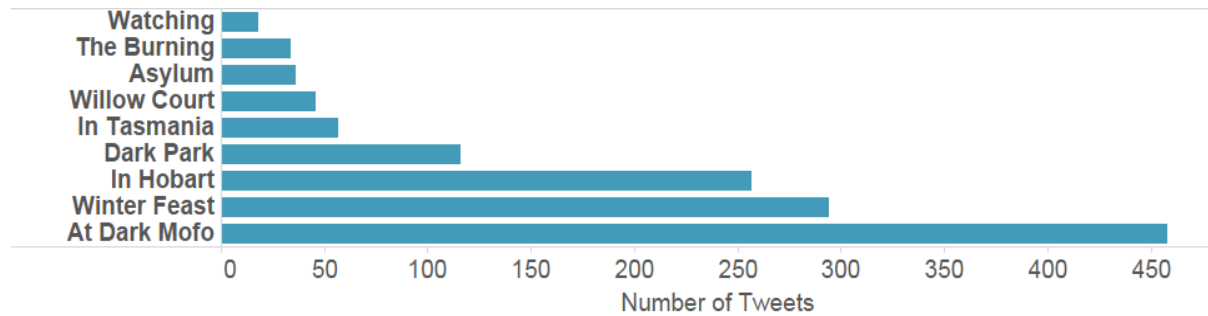
Geotweets with Coordinates



Tweet 'pinned' with a Place ID

² An interactive map of all geo-located tweets using the CARTO platform can be provided on request.

Place Mentions



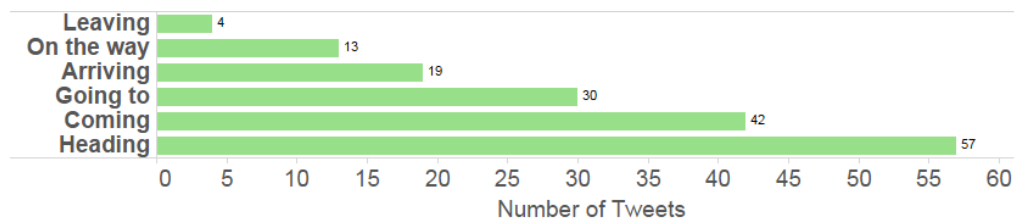
Event/location mentioned	Number of tweets
Winter Feast	279
Ogoh-ogoh	192
Dark Park	184
Nude Solstice swim	154
Willow Court	136
Asylum	96
House of Mirrors	72
The Funeral Party	64

The Lifted Brow @TheLiftedBrow
"Time of Life: Penis Whistles & Performance Art at Dark Mofo" | Kate Hennessy ow.ly/4URF303rVAK

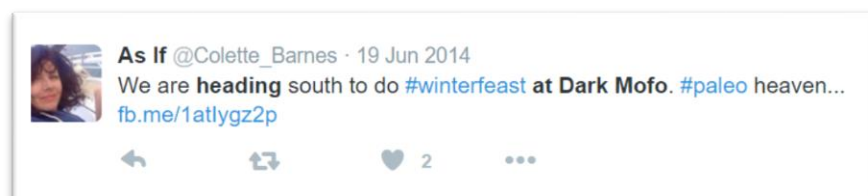
Using 'at Dark Mofo' as a place mention

TrISMA is capable of extracting location from tweets even when they are not marked as mentions or hashtags

Mobility Mentions



3% of total tweets (165 out of 5,555) included a mobility term, for example: 'On the way', 'on my way', 'on your way', 'on our way', 'Arriving', 'arrived', 'Heading', 'headed'.



An example of using a mobility term, captured by TrISMA

The Vision Splendid



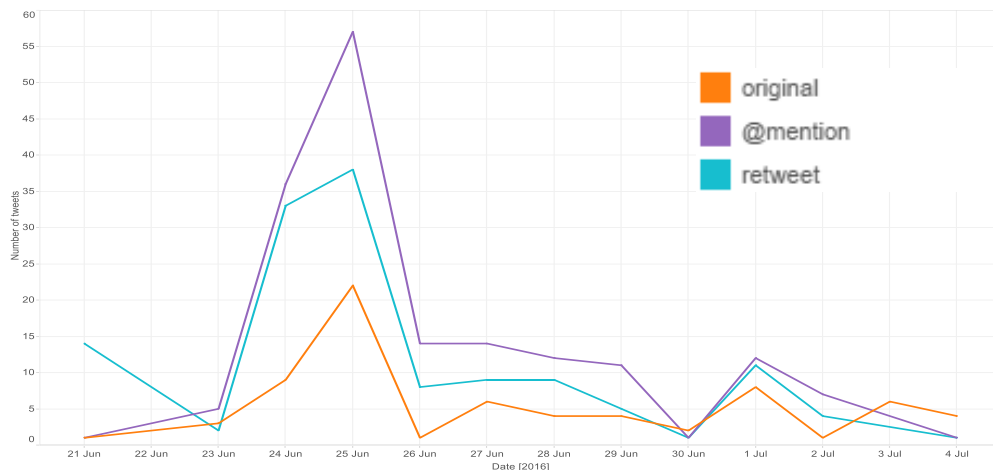
24 June – 2 July 2016 | Attendees: 320 (opening night 2016), 2500 tickets sold (up 19% from 2015)

Total tweets: 266 | Original tweets: 66 | Retweets: 120 | @mentions: 169 | Geotweets: 39

Twitter Data

The following data was captured from Twitter activity before, during and after the film festival - 8 June till 15 July 2016. Captured terms: @vision_splendid, #visionsplendid, #winton, @OUTBACK_QLD, @markdmelrose, Vision Splendid. Data has been filtered to exclude tweets that were captured but unrelated to the festival

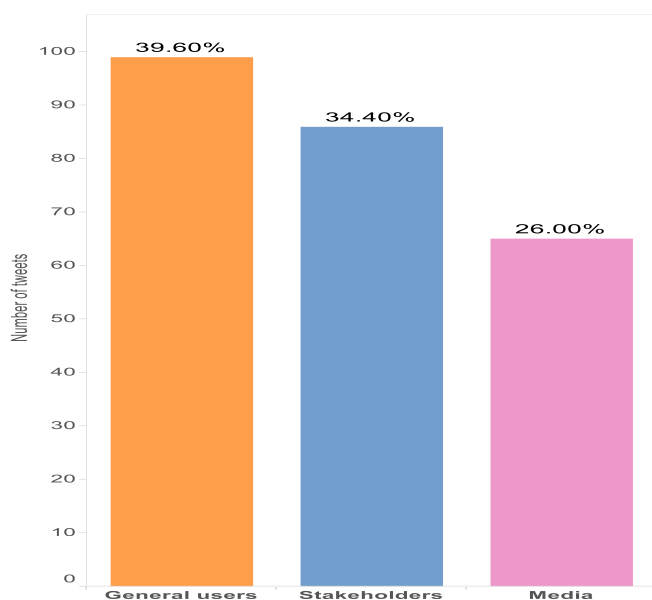
Day to Day Activity over Festival Period



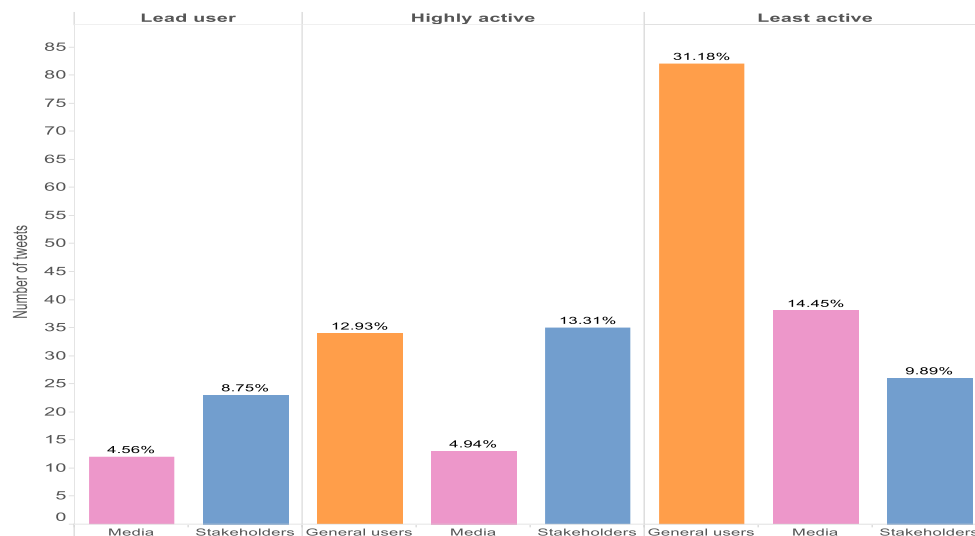
The highest peaks of activity throughout the festival was on the 25th of June, followed by the 24th. This indicates that the opening days of the festival generated the most conversation on social media, likely due to the increased publicity that coincides with the beginning of an event. However, as shown in the graph above, users are predominantly mentioning or retweeting other users, rather than posting original tweets. This indicates that lead users are posting original content, that are then being shared by others.

Type of User/User Contribution to Conversation on Twitter

This graph shows the number of tweets sent by general users, stakeholders and media throughout the festival. Over half of the tweets that were posted during the festival are either from media or stakeholders (60%), with 40% of tweets posted from general users. This indicates that the conversation was mainly driven by those already associated with the event (either directly or by reporting on it), rather than festival goers.



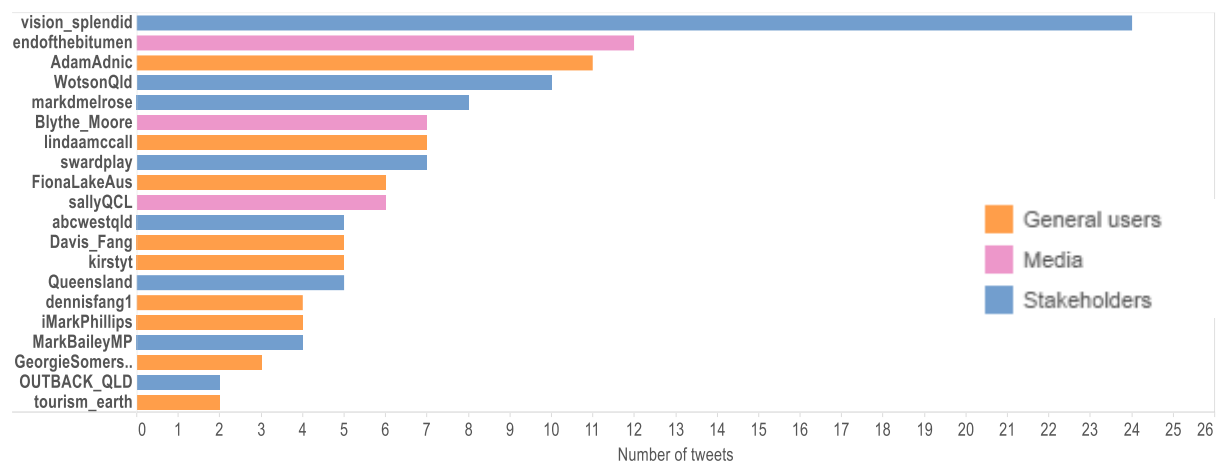
User Profile



This graph shows a breakdown of media, stakeholders and general users into users' percentiles. Media and stakeholders were the lead users who posted the highest amount of tweets. Most active users (in terms of the number of tweets posted) were the official account @vision_splendid and freelance journalist Pete Wallis (@endofthebitumen). Together, these users contributed a combined 13 % of total tweets.

Stakeholders were most represented in those highly active users, followed by general users, while general users were most represented in the least active percentile. This indicates that media and stakeholders are posting most frequently about the event (a small number of users posting a large amount of content), while general users tend to post only one or two tweets about the festival

Top 20 Posters

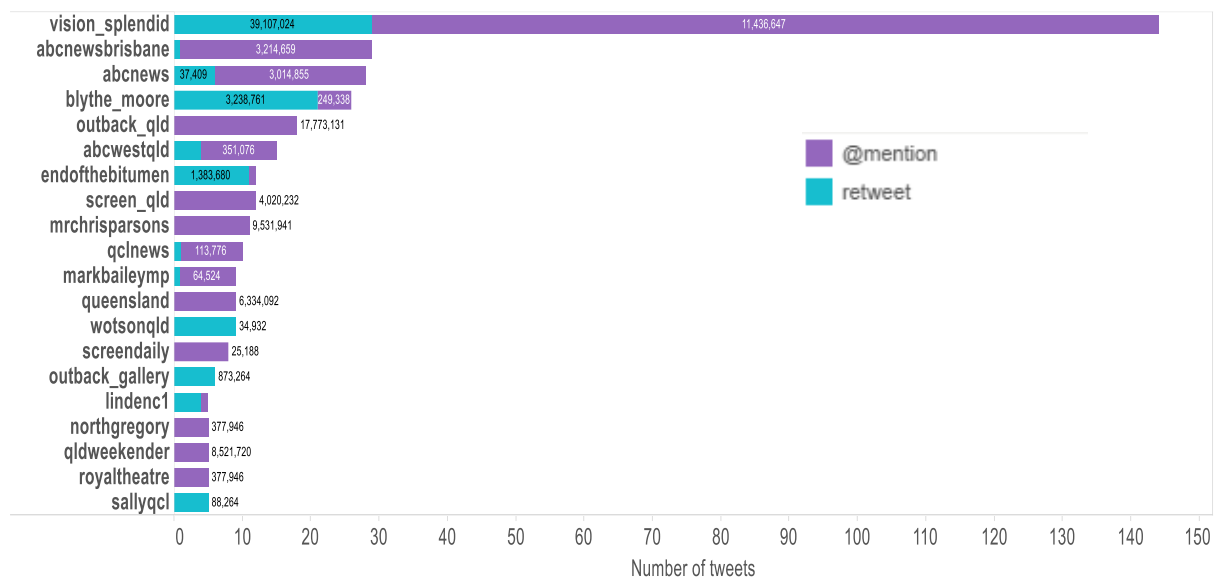


This graph shows the top 20 users who posted the most tweets throughout the festival and categorizes them into media, stakeholder and general user.

The 20 top posters include 7 stakeholders (35%), 4 media (20%) and 9 general users (45%).

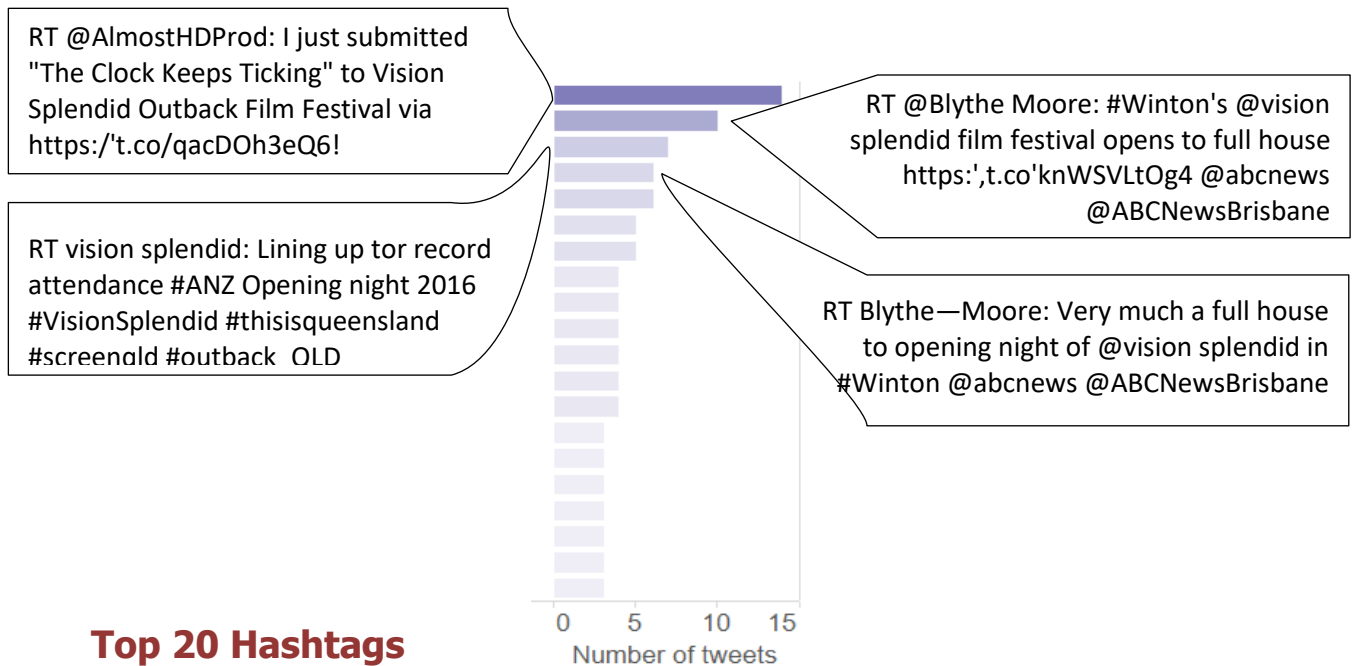
Username	Category	Description
Vision_Splendid	Stakeholder	Official event account
Endofthebitument	Media	Freelance journalist
AdamAdnic	General user	
WotsonQLD	Stakeholder	QLD festival guide
Markdmelrose	Stakeholder	Vision splendid director
Bylthe_moore	Media	ABC outback reporter
Lindaamccall	General user	
Swardplay	Stakeholder	Film critic/festival organiser
Fionalakeaus	General user	
sallyQCL	Media	Fairfax Ag Media journalist
Abcwestwld	Media	ABC local radio
Davis_Fang	General user	
Kirstyt	General user	
Queensland	Stakeholder	Official account for Events/Tourism QLD
Dennisfang1	General user	
Imarkphillips	General user	
markbaileyMP	Stakeholder	Qld Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety, Ports, Energy, Biofuels, Water Supply
Georgiesomers..	General user	
OUTBACK_QLD	Stakeholder	Official account for Outback Tourism
Tourism_earth	General user	

Most Mentioned Users

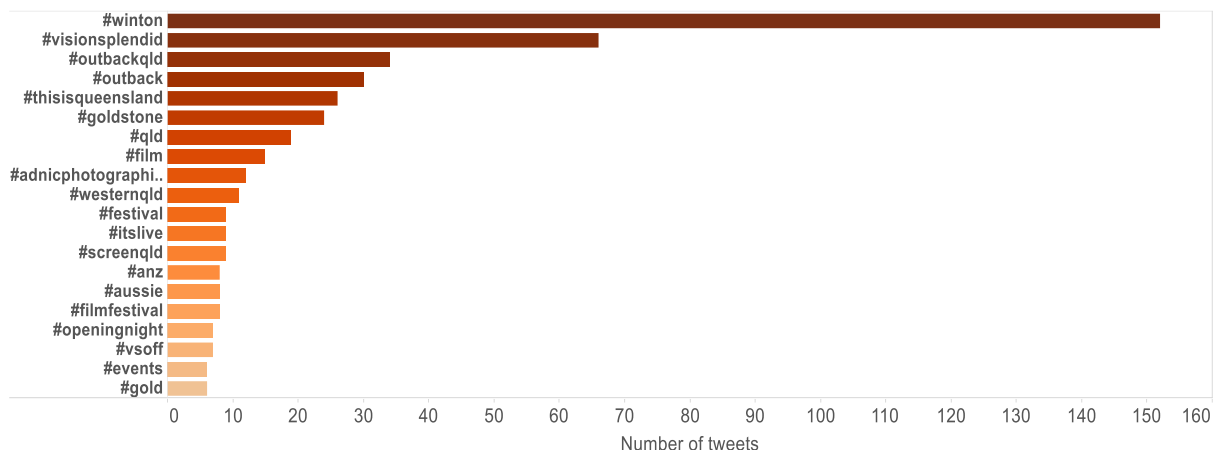


The number included on each bar represent the potential reach of each account, as it reflects the combined number of followers for all users who mentioned or retweeted the user.

Top RTed Tweets



Top 20 Hashtags



The graph shows the most popular hashtags used on Twitter throughout Vision Splendid. Interestingly, #winton is more frequently attached to tweets than #visionsplendid (the official event hashtag). This trend of location naming is apparent in other popular hashtags also signifying the location of the event, such as #outbackqld, #outback, #thisisqueensland, #qld, and #westernqld.

Place Engagement

11.2% (39 out of 346) of total tweets about the festival were identified by place ID captured in the bounded box. There were no tweets related to the Vision Splendid Outback Film Festival tagged with latitude and longitude coordinates.

Conclusion

Annex A: About the Authors



Terry Flew is Professor of Media and Communications at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of *The Creative Industries, Culture and Policy* (Sage, 2012), *Global Creative Industries* (Polity, 2013), *New Media: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2014) and co-author of *Media Economics* (Palgrave, 2015). He is the author of 42 book chapters and 76 refereed journal articles, and the founding editor of *Communication Research and Practice*. He is a member of the Australian Research Council (ARC) College of Experts for Humanities and Creative Arts, and in 2011-12 he worked for the Australian Law Reform Commission, chairing a review of the National Classification Scheme. He is an International Communications Association (ICA) Executive Board member, and chairs the Global Communication and Social Change Division.



Peta Mitchell is Vice Chancellor's Research Fellow at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia, where she is a Chief Investigator in QUT's Digital Media Research Centre. Her transdisciplinary research explores the connections between space, place, society, and the digital. She is author of *Cartographic Strategies of Postmodernity* (Routledge 2008) and *Contagious Metaphor* (Bloomsbury 2012), and co-author of *Imagined Landscapes: Geovisualizing Australian Spatial Narratives* (Indiana University Press 2016). As co-founder of the Cultural Atlas of Australia and leader of

QUT's G20 social media mapping project, she also has extensive experience in social media and cultural heritage digital mapping.



Orit Ben-Harush is a QUT Creative Industries researcher currently involved in a research project of social media in times of crisis. Her main research interests are social networks, real and virtual communities, social impact of the internet, development of online and mobile tools and apps for research purposes. In 2013-4 Orit conducted a postdoctoral research as part of the LINKS excellence center at Ben-Gurion University, Israel. Previous to her PhD studies, Orit has been employed in telecommunication companies in marketing positions as well as in internet research projects. For further details: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/oritb>.



Portia Vann is a doctoral candidate in the Digital Media Research Centre at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research focus is digital sport media, particularly examining how sports organisations coordinate social media strategy at large-scale sporting events.

Annex B: QUT Digital Media Research Centre

The QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC) conducts world-leading research that helps society understand and adapt to the changing digital media environment. It is a leading Australian centre for media and communication research, areas in which QUT has achieved the highest possible rankings in ERA, the national research quality assessment exercise. We also work actively with researchers in law, economics and education across a number of problem-focused research programs. Our projects cover the challenges of digital media for journalism, public communication and democracy; the dynamics and regulatory challenges of emerging digital media economies; and the embedding of digital media technologies into the practices of everyday life. The DMRC has a particular focus on innovative digital methods for social and cultural research, including the analysis of 'big social data'; is actively engaged with the Asian region; and has a strong commitment to research training for academic and industry researchers alike.

Aims and objectives

We aim to: 1. generate significant new findings and be a leader in methodological innovation; 2. provide a vibrant, welcoming research environment for research students and research partners; 3. facilitate further collaboration with other research and industry partners - locally, nationally, and internationally.

Who are we?

The DMRC is based in the Creative Industries Faculty at QUT, with collaborators in the law, science and engineering, education, and business faculties. It involves a core group of chief investigators, a broader community of centre members and associated researchers, and a vibrant and high achieving community of research students.

For further details see: <http://www.qut.edu.au/research/dmrc>

